

REMARKS

Election

In the Office Action of December 18, 2008, the Examiner withdraws the prior Restriction and institutes a new Restriction. In this new Restriction the claims are restricted into three groups, i.e., Group I, claims 1-7, Group II, claims 8-21, and Group III, claims 22-24. In response to the Restriction Requirement, applicants hereby elect Group II, claims 8-21. The Restriction Requirement is, however, traversed.

In the Restriction, it is asserted that Groups I and III do not relate to a single general inventive concept because the allegedly lack the same or corresponding technical feature under PCT rule 13.2. Applicants disagree.

The Restriction asserts that the technical feature which links the claims of Groups I and III is “a sintering tool that has a separating web and an inflatable sealing edge.” However, claim 22 recites a plastic part which has on one surface a plastic skin produced by the method according to Claim 1. Thus, all of the features of claim 1 are incorporated into claim 22, not merely those mentioned in the Restriction.

The Restriction also alleges that the sintering tool, separating web, and inflatable sealing edge does not make a contribution over the prior art, and then further asserts that these features are known in the art, citing Atsumi et al. (JP 2000-108148). However, the Restriction fails to demonstrate how Atsumi et al. (JP 2000-108148) discloses a sintering tool, separating web, and inflatable sealing edge.

Atsumi et al. disclose a “powder slush molding tool.” It is asserted in the Restriction that Atsumi et al. describe a separating web between references number 36 and 38 in Fig. 1. References nos. 36 and 38 are identified as anchoring grooves. A sheet material 40 is applied to wall face 34 using an anchoring member 42 that fits into grooves 36 and 38. The abstract of Atsumi et al. does not characterize anchoring member 42 as an inflatable sealing edge. Thus, the Restriction fails to demonstrate how the disclosure of Atsumi et al. describes or renders obvious each and every feature of the sintering tool described in applicants’ claims.

As for the subject matter of elected Group II, the Restriction present no rationale as to

why Group I and/or Group III is being restricted from the elected invention.

Thus, the Restriction fails to establish that the claims do not relate to a single general inventive concept under PCT rule 13.2. Withdrawal of the Restriction is respectfully requested.

In any event, upon determination that the elected product claims are allowable, applicants request rejoinder of any withdrawn method claims pursuant to MPEP 821.04(b).

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees associated with this response or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 13-3402.

Respectfully submitted,

/Brion P. Heaney/
Brion P. Heaney, Reg. No. 32,542
Attorney/Agent for Applicants

MILLEN, WHITE, ZELANO
& BRANIGAN, P.C.
Arlington Courthouse Plaza 1, Suite 1400
2200 Clarendon Boulevard
Arlington, Virginia 22201
Telephone: (703) 812-5308
Facsimile: (703) 243-6410

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